Los Angeles City Hall
200 North Spring Street
Los Angeles
Los Angeles County
California

HABS No. CA-2159

PHOTOGRAPHS

HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20240

ADDENDUM
FOLLOWS

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDING SURVEY

LOS ANGELES CITY HALL

HABS NO.
CA-2159

Location: 200 North Spring Street, Los Angeles, Ca. 90012

Present Owner: City of Los Angeles

Present Occupant: City of Los Angeles

Present Use: Government

Significance: When the City of Los Angeles wanted an impressive and monumental edifice to serve as a symbol of progressivism and modernism, they selected three of the most prominent architects of the period to design the building: John Austin, John Parkinson, and Albert Martin. City Hall was for many years the tallest structure in the city and was an attempt to impart a new building style to the city through its use of the neoclassical skyscraper form.

The landscaping and open spaces surrounding the structure serve to make this an important social as well as architecturally important building. The interior spaces of City Hall are remarkable for their carvings, bronze doors, murals, tile mosaics, and ornate lighting fixtures. There are twenty-seven different types of marble found in City Hall. Among numerous other contributions, decoration is by Herman Sachs and Antony Heinsenbergen.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of Erection: Initial construction started in 1926 (building permits, City of Los Angeles)

2. Architects: John Austin, John Parkinson, Albert Martin

John Austin - Austin was born in England in 1870. He was educated in private schools and was apprenticed to William S. Barwick, Architect.

In 1891 he moved to and settled in Philadelphia and was in the employ of Benjamin Linfoot, a prominent architect in that city. After a brief return to England, Austin sailed to and permanently settled in California. He arrived in Los Angeles in 1894. After working for several firms in the area he began to design independently.

Austin built in a variety of styles for many different types of buildings. From the Mission style to the skyscraper, Austin designed structures throughout the entire southwest and Pacific coast area.

John Parkinson (1861-1935) - Parkinson was born in England. After unsuccessfully attempting to establish an architectural office there, he moved to Napa, California in 1885.

From 1890 to 1894 he practiced in Seattle and in 1894 he moved his office to Los Angeles. One of his first important commissions was the Homer Laughlin Building (now Grand Central Market).

In 1905 he formed a partnership with Edwin Bergstrom. This firm designed numerous important structures in Los Angeles, including the original California Club, the Alexandria Hotel, the Citizens National Bank Building, the Metropolitón Building, and the Bullocks Broadway.

The partnership with Bergstrom was ended in 1915. After this John Parkinson continued practice with his son Donald. During this final period in his career his most important works were the Title Guarantee, Title Insurance Building and a collaboration on the Los Angeles City Hall.

A. C. Martin - A native of Illinois, Martin came to Los Angeles in 1904 and established what grew to be a large and very successful architectural firm. Among other buildings Martin designed and supervised the construction of Graumans Million Dollar Theatre, St. Vincents Church and the Ventura County Court House and Hospital.

Mr. Martin was extremely active in the City Planning Commission and the Chamber of Commerce.

3. Original and Subsequent Owners: City of Los Angeles

4. Builder: C. J. Kubach

5. Alterations and Additions: City Hall East, connected with City Hall at third floor

B. Historical Context: As the seat of municipal government for over 50 years, the decisions made within City Hall have obviously directed and shaped the development of Los Angeles in that time period.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement: City Hall is representative of the "modern" architectural ideal common to government buildings of the 1920's and a forerunner of what has come to be known as WPA moderne.

1. Architectural Character: The building is eclectic; the detail is neo-classic, combining low pitched tile roofs, large scale and simply detailed cornices below attic stories. The top os the building is seen as a free interpretation of the Temple of Halicarassus, with the battered walls suggesting Egyptian influences. The stepped roof is representative of the 1920's interest in antiquity and in geometrically based primary forms.

2. Condition of fabric: Excellent

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: City Hall and grounds occupy a parcel 430' x 250'

2. Foundations: Steel Reinforced Concrete

3. Walls: From first to third floors: granite; from third to top of terra cotta.

4. Structural system, framing: steel reinforced concrete

5. Porches, stoops, balconies, bulkheads: There are solid pier corners detailed to appear as buttresses on the central tower. This is further emphasized by the pier like elements that fill in the angles of the Greek cross tower plan.

6. Chimneys: none

7. Openings:

a. Doorways and doors: Although there are doorways on all four sides, the principal entrance is on Spring Street. It is approached by two broad tiers of granite steps that lead to a colonnaded fore-court. The monumental entrance is of Greek design with inscriptions over the portal. The doors are in bronze, depicting scenes from California's history.

b. Windows: The fenestration of the windows is classically inspried, emphasizing the continuity of the wall surface. Some of the windows are set back behind the walls in vertical beams.

8. Roof

a. Shape, covering: The low pitched roofs stepping back to the central tower are of tile.

b. Cornice, eaves: There are simply detailed cornices above the third, fifth and tenth stories.

c. Dormers, cupolas and towers: The 28 story central tower is capped with a stepped back metal roof.

C. Description of the Interior: Since this submission refers only to exterior recordation of the structure, only a brief description of interior details is included. Also, attached is a sketch of the ground floor plan by the Sanborn Map Co.

The rotunda is the main interior feature. The floor of the rotunda is of marble in many colors and shapes. In the center is a bronze insert of an old Spanish caravel. The walls of the rotunda are of French limestone. There are monolithic marble columns in many different colors. The barrel vaults, domed ceilings and pendatives are faced with acoustic tile.

Just off the rotunda is an equally ornate elevator lobby with extensive use of marble and bronze.

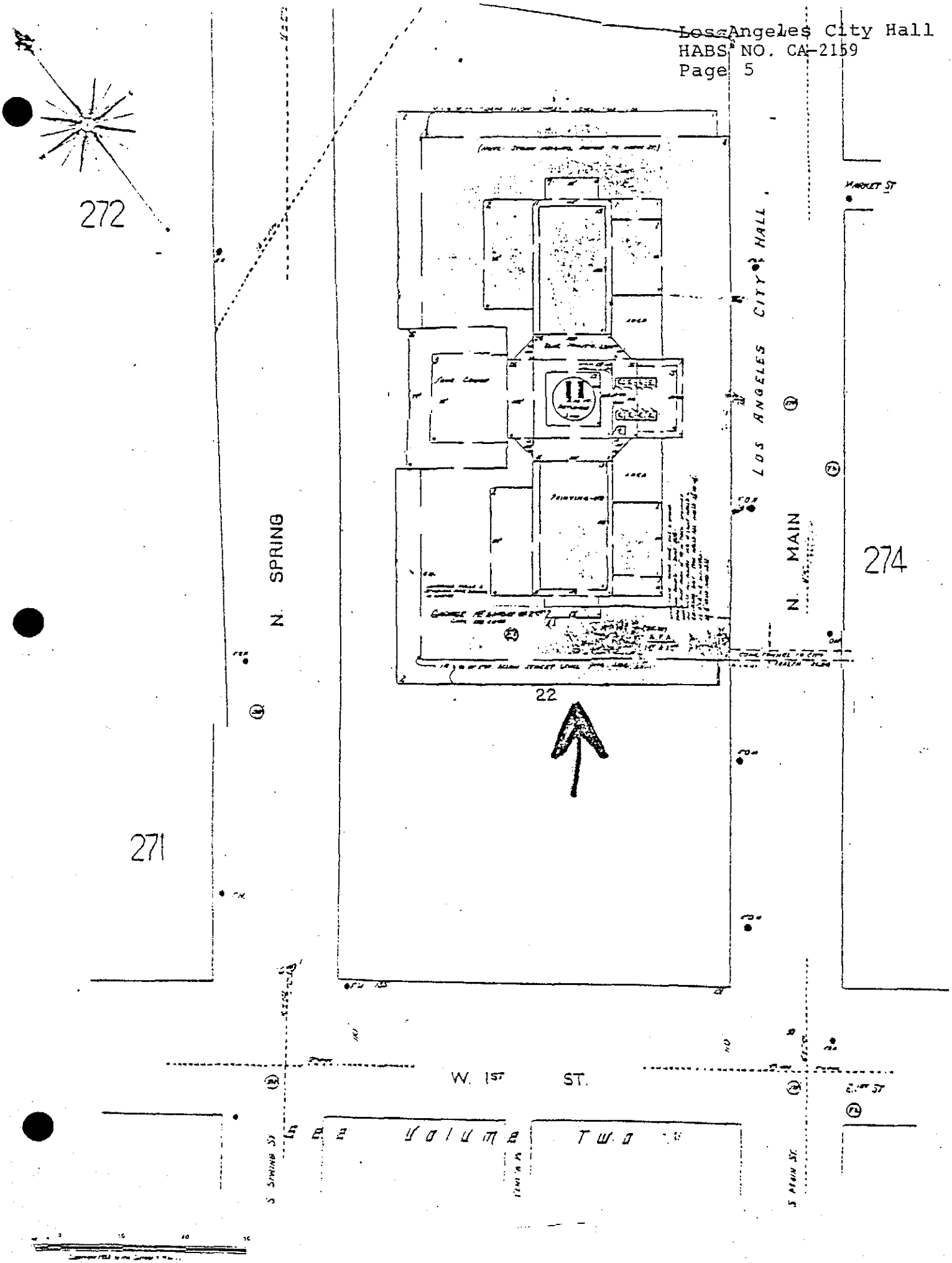
The north and south axis constitutes the principal corridor. The walls are of marble paneled with ornamental ceilings.

The third floor, which is the entrance floor from Spring Street contains the Council Chambers and the Mayor's Office. Other floors contain offices for City Council members and various city departments and commissions.

D. Site:

1. General Setting and orientation: City Hall and its grounds take up an entire city block bounded on the north by Temple Street, on the east by Main Street, on the south by First Street and on the west by Spring Street, the location of the principal entrance. City Hall is the tallest structure in the civic center complex stretching from Los Angeles Street on the east to the Harbor Freeway on the west, the Santa Ana Freeway on the north and First Street on the south.

2. Historic landscape design: City Hall is surrounded by lawns on the north, west and south sides. The landscape and grounds are well maintained and include brick and stone walkways, Moreton Bay figs, palm trees and several varieties of flowering plants.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See Volume Two

3. Outbuildings: City Hall is linked by a pedestrian bridge spanning Main Street at the third story level with City Hall East, a 19 story structure designed by Stanton and Stockwell and built in 1973. City Hall South is not physically connected with City Hall but is located on First Street immediately south of City Hall East. It was originally constructed in 1953 as the City Health Building.

PART III. SOURCES IN INFORMATION

A. Bibliography:

1. Primary and unpublished sources:

City of Los Angeles, Department of Building and Safety, building permits

City of Los Angeles, Department of Planning Land Use Planning and Management System

County of Los Angeles, Recorder's Office, Official Records of the County of Los Angeles

2. Secondary Sources

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Works Projects Administration, Los Angeles Drawings (Los Angeles, 1939)

Prepared by: Myra L. Frank,
Senior Transportation Planner
Roger G. Hatheway,
Consulting Research
Historian
Los Angeles Downtown
People Mover Authority
October, 1980

PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

The Los Angeles Downtown People Mover Project, supported by a demonstration grant from the Urban Mass Transportation Administration, is proposing to build an automated, grade-separated transit system in downtown Los Angeles.

A portion of the route as proposed would run along the north side of First Street and would require the placement of five columns approximately 30 feet north of the sidewalk on the First Street side of City Hall lawn. The top of the guideway will be approximately 30 feet above lawn level as it passes in front of the First Street facade of City Hall. The guideway columns will be placed between two rows of existing trees. Consequently a portion of the grounds, but no portion of the structure, will be altered by the project.

Addendum to
Los Angeles City Hall
200 North Spring Street
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HABS No. CA-2159

HABS
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PHOTOGRAPHS
XEROGRAPHIC COPIES OF COLOR TRANSPARENCIES
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Building Survey
Pacific Great Basin System Support Office
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
600 Harrison Street, Suite 600
San Francisco, California 94107-1372

HABS
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19-LOSAN,
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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDING SURVEY
LOS ANGELES CITY HALL

This report is an addendum to an 8-page report previously transmitted to the Library of Congress.

Part I. HISTORY AND DESCRIPTION

A. Physical History:

Los Angeles City Hall:

1. Date of erection:

   Bond Issue Authorized: June 5, 1923

   Architects Commissioned: August 17, 1925

   Preliminary Sketches submitted: September 16, 1925

   Ground Breaking: March 4, 1926

   Erection of Steel Frame: July 24, 1926

   Tower Foundation Poured: June 15, 1926

   Cornerstone Laid: June 22, 1927

   Building First Occupied: January 2, 1928

   Dedication Ceremony: April 26, 1928

2. Architect:

   John C. Austin, John Parkinson, Albert C. Martin -Architects
   Austin Whittlesey - Interiors
   Casper Gruefeld, Carlo Gerrone, Henry Lion - Sculptors
   Herman Sachs, Antony Heinsbergen - Decorative Painters

   John C. Austin was born in England in 1870. He was educated in private schools and was apprenticed to William S. Barwick, Architect. In 1891 he moved to and settled in Philadelphia and was employed by Benjamin Linfoot, a prominent architect in that city. After a brief return to England, Austin settled in California, arriving in Los Angeles in 1894. After working for several firms in the area he began to design independently. Upon forming his own firm, Austin designed in a variety of styles for different building types across the southwest and down the Pacific coast.

John Parkinson was born in England and like Austin immigrated to the United States settling in Napa, California in 1885. From 1890 to 1894 he practiced in Seattle, building a number of schools as Architect of Schools and Superintendent of Construction. After a slow Seattle economy resulted in his termination as Architect of Schools, Parkinson moved his office to Los Angeles in 1894. One of his first important commissions was the Homer Laughlin Building (now Grand Central Market).

In 1905 Parkinson formed a partnership with Edwin Bergstrom and their office designed a number of important Los Angeles edifices including the original California Club, the Alexandria Hotel, the Citizens National Bank Building, the Metropolitan Building, and the Bullocks on Broadway. When the partnership with Bergstrom ended in 1915 Parkinson began to practice with his son, Donald. During this final period in his career his most important works were the Title Guarantee Insurance Building and the collaboration on the Los Angeles City Hall.

A. C. Martin was a native of Illinois. Moving west to Los Angeles in 1904, Martin established a large and successful practice. Among his works are the Ventura County Court House and the Ventura County Hospital. Martin was an extremely active member of the City Planning Commission and the Chamber of Commerce.

It is unclear how these three architects came to form a partnership for the Los Angeles City Hall project. None of the architectural periodicals of the day mention a design competition for the building. During the early 1930s Parkinson, Martin and Austin were again jointly commissioned as the architects for the Los Angeles Union Terminal complex. This large group of reinforced concrete structures was estimated to have cost seven million dollars.

Austin Whittlesey, son of Los Angeles architect Charles Whittlesey, was responsible for the elaborate interiors of Los Angeles City Hall. Whittlesey won the Le Brun traveling scholarship and was in Europe for a period of time as a student of architecture. He was responsible for the coordination of the craftsmen who worked on the building especially Casper Gruefeld, Carlo Gerrone, and Henry Lion who were sculptors for the project and Herman Sachs and Antony Heinsbergen who served as decorative painters.

3. Original and Subsequent Owner:

   The City of Los Angeles.

4. Builder, Contractor, Suppliers:

   General Contractor: C. J. Kubach Co., Inc.

5. Original Plans and Construction Drawings:

   Housed with the City of Los Angeles.

6. Alterations and Additions:

   City Hall is linked with City Hall East by a pedestrian bridge spanning Main Street at the third story level. This is the only major exterior alteration to the structure. The east building is a 19-story structure designed by Stanton and Stockwell in 1973. City Hall South, constructed in 1953 as the City Health Building, and not physically connected with the original City Hall, is located on First Street immediately south of City Hall East.

   The secondary interior spaces of the Los Angeles City Hall have been altered extensively over the years. However, the primary public spaces retain their historic character and integrity. Alterations to each floor are discussed in the interiors section of this outline.

B. Historical Context:

A decade of aggressive growth following World War I inspired Los Angeles' fourth, and present, City Hall. In concept and execution, the building was meant to express the civic pride of the city. Mayor George E. Cryer promised Angelenos a new municipal building "that would be in keeping, architecturally, with the dignity and community idealism of America's most rapidly growing city." Conceived as part of a larger Civic Center design, Los Angeles City Hall was to be the centerpiece. Although the Civic Center never developed as originally planned, its centerpiece became a strong landmark in the city's skyline.

Charles Mumford Robinson, a planner from Rochester, New York and a spokesman for the City Beautiful movement, was hired by the City of Los Angeles to develop an overall plan for Los Angeles. Drawing from City Beautiful philosophy, Robinson's plan of 1909 included a large municipal administrative center at Spring and Temple Streets. In 1910, the Los Angeles City Council approved funding to purchase a lot on Spring Street to serve as the site of a new Civic Center. Located across the street from the old Rocha Adobe, Los Angeles' first municipal building, the site seemed appropriate to house the city's civic needs. World War I stalled the plans for a number of years but momentum for a Civic Center, although less grandiose, returned in the 1920s.

Werner Hegemann, author of the 1922 work *The American Vitruvius: The Architects Handbook to Civic Art,* recommended the use of an office tower for a city hall rather than the commonly used domed structure. His chapter on American civic centers appears to have been a strong influence on the original design for the Los Angeles Civic Center. This chapter illustrates a civic center with a city hall tower similar in character to the final design for Los Angeles City Hall.

The idea of the American Civic Center was formulated within the City Beautiful Movement. Largely a response to the crowded, chaotic and dirty cities that had

developed as a result of industrial growth, the City Beautiful offered improvements to polluted cities that emphasized planning on a grand scale including parks, boulevards, gardens and as well as architectural improvements. Another approach included formulating a separate administrative center to house city government away from industrial centers. The first organized City Beautiful effort in Los Angeles was an art committee established in 1903 to encourage an interest in civic improvement. Two years later this committee was formally constituted by the city as the Municipal Arts Commission. Through this committee, Charles Mumford Robinson was hired and the idea for a Los Angeles Civic Center began to develop.

During the 1920s Los Angeles observed a strict building height limit of 150 feet or twelve stories. However, a new City Hall building was perceived as the city's primary symbol and thus a variance to the building code was presented to Los Angeles' voters in 1923. The results of the vote authorized a $7.5 million bond issue for construction of a new City Hall. The final design included 28 stories and a 160-foot pyramidal tower capping the structure, making it by far the tallest structure in Los Angeles.

Ground was broken for the new building on March 4, 1926, with the formal dedication just over two years later. Concerned that the structure would be vulnerable in an earthquake, the team of architects designed the tower using a compressible joint at each floor. This technology assured that City Hall would ride the waves of a sizable earthquake.

The firm of Gladding McBean supplied 3000 tons of enamel finished terra cotta colored a light cream and flecked with black for the structure's tower and wings. The flanking wings were crowned with red roofing tile also manufactured by Gladding McBean. Some of the decorative tile found in the building was manufactured by Gladding McBean's Tropico Plant. The mortar used in the building consisted of sand from every county in California, cement from each of the cement mills in the state, and water collected from each of the 21 missions, increasing the symbolism of the structure.

Amid much fanfare, City Hall's corner stone was laid by the Native Sons of the Golden West at a June 22, 1927 ceremony. Located near the main entrance on Spring Street, the cornerstone also served as a time capsule containing a 1927-28 City Budget, a Los Angeles Telephone Directory and copies of local newspapers for the day. The formal dedication ceremony was an even more elaborate event. The festivities included: a procession of Angelenos stretching three miles; a dedication lunch at the Biltmore Hotel; a reception for visiting dignitaries; the movie production *Historical Pageantry* directed by Hollywood's Sid Grauman; and an official ceremony orchestrated by famed film producer Joseph Schenck. The grand finale consisted of the brilliant illumination of the building with search lights and President Coolidge pressing a telegraph key in his White House office to light the Lindbergh Beacon at the apex of the structure.

In the years since its completion, City Hall has become an important Los Angeles landmark. The structure has served as the Daily Planet in the old *Superman* television series, was destroyed by Martians in the *War of the Worlds*, and was a highlight of the television series *Dragnet*. More importantly, the building has been a symbol of the city government and, though the Los Angeles Civic Center

never attained the architectural unity that other Civic Centers did, Los Angeles City Hall has always conveyed a strong sense of the city's history.

Part II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement

The descriptive material below was collected during the site visit to the building or was extracted from information contained in two publications: *The Historic and Cultural Resource Survey of the Los Angeles City Hall* by Martin & Associated, dated May 4, 1993 and George Hale's 1928 publication entitled *Los Angeles City Hall.*

1. Architectural Character:

Los Angeles City Hall is an eclectic mix of styles and has been identified as one of the precursor structures to the style that became known as WPA Moderne. The structure clearly draws its form from Bertram Goodhue's design for the Nebraska State Capitol (begun in 1920 and completed in 1930), which featured a skyscraper tower rising from a Beaux Arts-inspired base. Goodhue's solution was a clear departure from the forms used previously in skyscraper design. While the tower of the Nebraska State Capitol was capped with a dome, the designers of Los Angeles City Hall crowned their structure with a stepped pyramid. This stepped feature, and the colonnaded hall beneath it, were intended to be a streamlined version of an ancient Greek monument, the tomb of the King of Mausolus at Halicarnassus.

The iconography (the imagery and symbolism of Los Angeles City Hall) is highly complex. The architects of the building presented the citizens with an architectural program that read like a history book. The building was intended to remind the visitor of the city's origins and its aspirations for the future. The use of iconography was commonplace for public buildings, with Goodhue's Los Angeles Public Library of 1922-26 another likely influence on City Hall. As with the Nebraska State Capitol, Goodhue worked with sculptor Lee Lawrie and with philosopher Hartley B. Alexander to draw up the ideological program of decoration for the library. Similarly, the architects of Los Angeles City Hall worked with sculptors, painters and other craftsmen to create an architectural monument to the history of the city.

The exterior of the building is organized into three distinct masses: a broad granite-clad base ascending to a parapet above the fourth story; a terra cotta-clad mid section rising from the 5th to 11th floors topped by a red, Spanish-tile hipped roof; and lastly, a terra cotta-clad tower rising to a 50-foot high ceremonial reception room and exterior observation deck at the 27th floor. The entire ensemble is capped by a stepped pyramidal roof of the same terra cotta.

The base section is divided visually into three horizontal elements. The first and second floors consist of heavy, rusticated granite blocks on the east elevation with arched openings for doors and windows. The north, south and

west elevations of the base are composed of multicolored, ashlar granite enclosing a terrace on three sides and forming a plinth for the third floor.

The Spring Street courtyard, or west entrance and the major, ceremonial functions of City Hall also occur in the base section. It is finished in smoother and more regular cut granite blocks than the lower floors. Monumental round-headed windows with bronze grilles on either side of this entrance light the City Council Chamber and Public Works Session Room. A similarly monumental glazing pattern on the east elevation lights the high ceilinged spaces of the Mayor's Suite and the City Clerk's Suite.

The mid-rise section of City Hall, from the fifth floor to the eleventh floors, is composed of north and south office wings with red tile hipped roofs. Simple steel casement windows are set into the terra cotta walls. The terra cotta skin is comprised of rectangular blocks with an off-white and speckled glaze designed to be compatible with the granite finish below. This section is capped by a set back, crenellated cornice and parapet at the tenth floor.

The tower section fenestration and terra cotta skin are similar to that of the mid-rise section. The tower rises from the 11th floor to the exterior colonnaded gallery of the 27th floor. The stepped pyramid above the 27th floor gallery houses mechanical and elevator equipment.

The north and south elevations are nearly identical with the base and mid-rise sections are similar to, but narrower than, the east and west elevations. At the tower, the north and south elevations are identical to the east and west.

The west elevation includes two broad flights of steps leading to the Spring Street Courtyard, which is the primary entrance to City Hall and to the terrace that extends around the north and south sides of the building. The east elevation is similar to the west but is less monumental in character and is entered at one level below the other entrances. Both the west and east elevations are symmetrical about the building's east-west axis.

The interior of the Los Angeles City Hall features spaces that evoke architectural styles from numerous periods of history. The forecourt resembles a cloister associated with monastic traditions. The rotunda, with its shallow saucer dome and stylized mosaics, has features typically found in an early Byzantine church interior. The City Council Chamber is in the form of a basilica, the earliest Christian church form. The Public Works Session Chamber, square in plan with shallow arcades on all sides, recalls Romanesque monastery spaces. The barrel-vaulted corridors and groin-vaulted elevator lobby derive their architecture from Renaissance forms. Thus, the repertoire of European archetypal architecture is combined to suggest the many temporal, geographic and cultural sources from which the City of Los Angeles has drawn its constituency. Further descriptions of the iconography used in specific spaces is found later in this outline.

2. Condition of Fabric:

Project Restore, a city and privately funded project to restore Los Angeles City Hall began in 1989. The project was partially underway when the building was damaged in the 1994 Northridge earthquake. Since that time the project has taken a new direction with the seismic retrofit of the structure taking precedence.

B. Description of Exteriors:

1. Overall Dimensions:

City Hall and accompanying grounds occupy a parcel measuring 770 feet north to south and 338 feet east to west.

2. Foundations:

The foundations measure approximately 470 feet by 250 feet and are of steel reinforced concrete.

3. Walls:

Interior walls are composed of a variety of materials including plaster, marble, and tile.

4. Structural System:

The structural system for City Hall is steel reinforced concrete.

5. Exterior Cladding:

From the first to third floors the walls are granite. Then, from the third floor to the apex of the structure the walls are of terra cotta.

6. Openings:

A. Windows:

The fenestration throughout the structure is classically inspired and meant to emphasize the continuity of the wall surface. Aside from the two story arched openings at the second and third floors all of the window openings are rectangular in shape though the size of the openings varies somewhat.

Most of the structure's fenestration is steel window sash. The windows are casement style, double light, one-over-one with a horizontal transom above. Some of the windows on the lower stories are more decorative in character with an arched grilled portion above the main operating window. Some of the grill work at the lower stories is highly decorative in nature such as at the west courtyard.

Many of the windows are in a deteriorated state. Some window glass has been replaced; however, a number of panes remain cracked or broken.

B. Doors:

Although there are doorways on all four sides, the principal entrance is on Spring Street. It is approached by two broad tiers of granite steps that lead to a colonnaded forecourt. The monumental entrance is inspired by Greek design with inscriptions over the portal reading "Let us have Faith that Right Makes Might," Abraham Lincoln and "Righteousness Exhalteth a People," Solomon.

The doors are modeled low-relief bronze and depict six scenes from California's history. The are titled: the Finding and Naming of the Site of Los Angeles, 1769; Founding of Los Angeles, 1781; American Occupation, 1846; Public School Founding, 1853; Opening of the Aqueduct Headgate, 1913; Placing the Last Stone of the Breakwater, 1915. These six panels were the work of Henry Lion. Bronze lighting standards are located on either side of the entrance.

Secondary entrances are provided at the north and south elevations from terraces at the ground floor. On the parapet over the south entrance is the following inscription: "He that violates his oath profanes the divinity of faith itself," Cicero. The inscription above the north entrance reads: "The highest of all sciences and services - the Government," James Russell Lowell. The doors at these locations are bronze with an inner set of glass doors.

The east facade pedestrian entrance at street level is pierced by seven large arched openings. Near either end are the entrances to the parking garage; on both sides of the public entrance to the building are smaller openings leading to the inner light courts. The public entrance consists of three arched openings approached by a short flight of steps. The doors at this elevation are double glass doors. A granite-clad handicap ramp has been added to this side of the building. The elevated, enclosed pedestrian walkway to City Hall East at the third floor is centered above these three arches.

7. Roof:

There are clay tile roofs at the wings of the structure and the tower is capped with a stepped pyramid terra cotta roof.

8. Porches, stoops, balconies and bulkheads:

There are solid pier corners detailed to appear as buttresses on the central tower. This is further emphasized by the pier-like elements that fill in the angles of the Greek cross tower plan. The 27th floor exterior gallery could be considered a balcony.

9. Decorative elements:

Although the trend of the day was to stray from ornament, the Los Angles City Hall, similar to the Nebraska State Capitol by Goodhue, used local history as the inspiration for its ornament. Decorative features are found at the exterior entrances and included doors, light fixtures, and tile work. The pyramid at the apex of the structure should also be considered a decorative feature. However, much of the decorative detailing on the building is at the interior spaces. The major public spaces on the first through third floors are highly decorative, as described below.

C. Description of Interiors

Once inside the building, the architecture combines influences from Byzantine, Romanesque and Renaissance periods including Italian, Spanish and French characteristics. Intended to reflect the rich, diverse cultural strains of the city's population the main pubic spaces of the first three floors offer a variety of architectural materials and elements forming a coherent interior decorative scheme. Much of the decorative elements are either representative of local lore or are composed of local materials.

1. Floor Plans and Descriptions:

A. Basement:

The basement is comprised of parking areas, mechanical and equipment rooms, offices for building services and storage areas. Few historic finishes or areas are located in the basement. Most of the floor plan remains as shown on original construction drawings. The corridors have cement stained flooring laid in 12 inch squares. Many of the corridors have original marble bases, doors, frames and oak moldings. The parking garage occupies a large portion of the basement level.

B. First Floor:

The Main Street vestibule and lobby is the primary entrance at the building's east side. Public information bulletin boards are located in this lobby area as is an information desk. The lobby area opens onto the elevator lobby which in turn opens to the stair to the basement. Two banks of four elevators are present at the elevator lobby. This elevator plan is consistent to the tenth floor. The eleventh through twenty second floors are only serviced by four elevators.

The offices spaces accessed via stairs to the north and south of the vestibule originally housed the City Clerk's office which had a beamed ceiling with plaster cornice trim at columns and pilasters. The room contains a long counter of wood and glass that likely dates to the construction of the building. The west portion of the first floor is, like the basement, occupied by parking.

C. Second Floor:

The marble stairs on either side of the Main Street first floor lobby lead up to the second floor east lobby. This space opens onto the second floor elevator lobby. Marble-lined corridors divide the second floor into four quadrants with office spaces in each quadrant ringing the four light courts. Most of the primary spaces remain on this floor.

The Temple (north) and First (south) Street lobbies are identical two-story spaces providing access to the second and third floors via exterior doors at the second floor. The north and south lobbies open onto the north and south galleries at the third floors. Pink Kasota stone is used for the balustrades and several types of marble face the stairs and walls within these spaces.

The City Treasurer's Office is located on the east side of the structure and is a large room with a high, coffered ceiling. Similar to the City Clerk's office on the first floor this room has a plaster cornice trim at columns and pilasters.

D. Third Floor:

The third floor includes City Hall's primary sequence of public spaces. The principal entry off the Spring Street forecourt opens to a richly decorated vestibule and rotunda. The walls of these primary spaces are faced with a cream-colored French limestone. Within the vestibule, decorative faience tile panels offer information about the construction of the building and those individuals responsible for this monumental structure. The vestibule's barrel vaulted ceiling is paneled, coffered and painted in dull reds and golds softened with touches of blues and greens. Figures rendered in monotones on a dark background symbolize Law, Justice, Charity and other related subjects. Emphasis is given to the symbolical group of figures representing the City of Los Angeles. These figures are surrounded by the region's bounteous natural gifts such as the sun, the sea and an abundance of agricultural crops.

Adjacent to the vestibule is the rotunda - the central interior feature of the structure. Square in plan and extending four stories, the rotunda is surmounted by a domed ceiling 61 feet in height. The rotunda is ringed by arcades on the third and fourth floors. The rotunda floor is covered with marble of various colors, forms and textures laid in geometrical designs producing a complete scheme of interlaced circular, checkered and banded fields. At the center of the marble field is a cast bronze insert representing an old Spanish caravel typical of early Pacific exploration.

The domed ceiling, pendentives and barrel vaults are faced with acoustical tile of a tan color, inlaid with patterns of faience tile arranged in a highly decorative manner. Allegorical figures within the tile represent various attributes of city government including Government, Law, Education, Protection, Art, Trust, Health, and Public Service.

The principal source of light in the rotunda is a cast bronze chandelier or electrolier with silhouetted figures that depict early explorers and settlers of southern Califomia. Secondary lighting standards are located in each of the four splayed angles. These rest on black marble bases and are surmounted by flared glass shades. Original pendant light fixtures remain throughout the third floor.

The beamed ceilings of the passages around the rotunda are California Redwood, simply treated with painted decorative motifs.

Continuing along the west-to-east axis, the Rotunda opens onto the third floor elevator lobby, which then opens to the east lobby. The third floor east lobby is larger and more formal than the comparable space on both the first and second floors. This east lobby provides access to the Mayor's suite to the south, the City Clerk's office to the north, and the bridge to City Hall East to the east.

The walls in the third floor public corridors are richly decorated with stenciled plaster lunettes and tile panels. Walls in the elevator lobby are Saint Genevieve Rose marble with French pink marble pilasters and red Verona marble elevator doors surrounds. The elevator doors are similar to, but more detailed than, those on the first and second floors. At the east lobby, walls are French pink with Botticino marble trim. In addition, the east lobby has murals depicting earth, wind, water and fire, with the inscription: "The masters of education hold in their hands the future of the world."

The third floor Mayor's Suite is comprised of a series of ceremonial rooms and several private offices accessed from the east lobby. Private offices for the Mayor's assistants flank a corridor decorated with marble flooring and plaster cornices. This corridor terminates at a barrel-vaulted Reception Lobby. The lobby opens onto a Reception Room and a corridor to a small, but highly decorated, Mayor's Office Reception Room. This small chamber, that has served as a conference room, leads to the Mayor's ceremonial office which has a high beamed ceiling. Last in this sequence of spaces is the Mayor's private office which has been altered from its original design leaving few historic finishes.

The City Council Chamber and Public Works Session Room remain substantially intact. The City Council Chamber is located to the south of the Rotunda while the Public Works Session Room is located to the north. Each room is accessed via an entry corridor. These two public spaces are similar in the richness of their decoration but differ in both form and details; the City Council Chamber is the larger of the two rooms. Both are richly decorated and present the visitor with a formal architecture that consists of columns, arcades, decorative windows and wooden benches for spectators. The floors of the spaces are of several materials including marble, quarry tile, and pattemed rubber tile. The walls within these spaces have original marble, plaster, ceramic and acoustical tile finishes. Columns are comprised of a number of marble types. The ceilings are coffered and decoratively painted.

The remaining areas of the third floor are primarily occupied with supporting office spaces for the Mayor and Councils.

E. Mezzanine:

The mezzanine consists of four separate areas around the four light courts. Each area is accessed separately. The southwest mezzanine contains offices of Council persons and is accessed by the executive elevator, as well as the stairs. The northeast mezzanine is also accessed by elevator and stairs while the northwest and southeast portions of the mezzanine are only reached via stairs.

The corridor to the council offices retains its original marble floor, border and base, oak crown molding and plaster cornice. Most of the council office areas have been altered with a few spaces retaining the cornice molding.

F. Fourth Floor:

The fourth floor originally housed the City of Los Angeles Building Department. This floor has been extensively remodeled through the years to accommodate the changing needs of what is now called the Department of Building and Safety. Little remains of the historic layout of this floor other than the elevator and the corridor that rings the rotunda. Some of the original beamed ceilings remain but are hidden by dropped ceilings. Original skylights have also been removed. The floor plan consists of four major office areas around the four light courts and rotunda.

G. Fifth Floor:

From the fifth to the tenth floor the elevator core dominates the eastern side of the floor plan with two stair towers at the western side opposite the elevators.

The fifth floor, which housed the Planning Department, is organized around north and south corridors emanating from the ring corridor around the top of the rotunda dome. The current layout closely follows the original with the central corridors retaining most of the their original fabric including marble flooring, marble and wood bases, marble service elevator surround, oak crown molding, fire hose cabinet, oak and decorative obscure glass doors and oak trim. Several office spaces on this floor retain their original dark wood and glass partitions. In addition, picture moldings and small closets remain in some offices.

The Art Commission spaces overlooking the rotunda have been remodeled; however, the octagonal vestibule into this space remains. The fourth floor roof is accessible at several locations at the fifth floor level

H. Sixth Floor:

The sixth floor was originally laid out similarly to the fifth floor. It has been remodeled through the years and 1940's wood partitions remain in several locations. The central portion of the floor plan is occupied by the enclosed rotunda dome structure which can be accessed via small doors at the northwest and southwest corners. The toilet rooms on this floor have been remodeled with new fixtures; however, there are a few exceptions where fixtures remain. The marble floor of the elevator lobby remains.

I.. Seventh Floor:

The seventh floor is primarily developed as an open office space around the elevator and service area. Within the service area is a rectangular vault that is connected by original stairs to vaults on the seventh, eighth and ninth floors. The corridor surrounding the vault has marble flooring. The corridor has typical oak crown molding and other historic details. The north and south wings have an open floor plan with seven pairs of structural piers centered within the spaces.

J. Eighth and Ninth Floors:

The eighth and ninth floors are laid out in a open plan with a corridor connecting the north and south wings. Both floors have the central vault feature. On each floor some of the original wood and glass paneling remains. The corridors and elevator lobbies have marble flooring. The eighth floor has an eastern office area of private offices that retain much original detailing. These features have been removed on the ninth floor.

K. Tenth Floor:

At the tenth floor, the south wing was the City Hall cafeteria and the north wing housed the Transportation Department. The original marble corridor of the elevator lobby remains. This east-west corridor terminates at the doors to the original Gymnasium. The original north-south corridor leading to the south wing cafeteria has been removed. The cafeteria has been remodeled over the years with much of the fabric dating to a 1940s period renovation project. There are however a number of Art Deco lighting fixtures that remain. None of the north office area original fabric remains .

L. Eleventh Floor:

The eleventh floor is comprised of the kitchen for the cafeteria, two non-original conference sized rooms or executive dining rooms, and offices for the Traffic Department. The north and south wings are open to the cafeteria and office areas on the tenth floor. According to original drawings this floor was to have a men's locker room for the tenth floor gymnasium, a men's club and a balcony overlooking the cafeteria. Very little of the original fabric remains on this floor.

M. Twelfth Floor:

The 12th floor is the first of the tower floors and is typical of the tower layout, materials and condition. A short public corridor runs adjacent to the elevator lobby, giving access to a toilet room, exit stairs, service elevator and the main, open office area. Directly to the east of the elevator lobby are a pair of doors opening onto an office area.

Like most of the tower the only historic fabric remaining includes the core elevator lobby, some corridors with original marble and oak trim, the toilet room, the service elevator and the exit stairs. Some original wood wall base is evident in office spaces

N. Thirteenth through Twenty-First Floors:

With the exception of the 14th floor, floors 13 to 21 are similar to floor 12 in layout, materials and condition. The elevator lobbies typically open onto a corridor which gives access to office spaces, toilets, service elevator and stairs. Some floors have open office plans with modular furniture, and some have perimeter offices around an internal corridor.

Original construction drawings indicate floors 16 to 22 were to be courtroom floors. These floors were laid out with three court modules, each with a judges chamber, and related spaces. The spaces were accessed via a wide marble floored corridor from the elevator lobby. Floors 14, 15, and 23 were also developed as courtroom floors. Little of this historic layout or fabric remains today with the 14th floor being the only exception.

O. Fourteenth Floor:

The 14th floor retains the original wide central Y-shaped corridor. This corridor gives access to three separate office suites. The corridor floor is vinyl tile, however some of the original marble floor and all of the marble base remains. In addition, the original courtroom doors and crown molding remain. Two conference or workrooms, as originally configured remain on this floor. One judge's toilet remains in the southwest corner.

P. Twenty-Second through Twenty-Sixth Floor:

The 22nd to 26th floors have similar layout and characteristics. The four high-rise elevators stop at the 22nd floor, and a single tower elevator located in the northeast corner gives access to these upper floors culminating in the 27th floor Reception Room. The tower elevator is similar to the four high-rise elevators. The marble trim remains surrounding the door frame in some locations. Typically, the tower elevator opens onto a small vestibule leading to office spaces. In most other respects these tower floors resemble the lower tower floors. All of these floors have been significantly altered. Many have exposed structural work and are not in a finished condition.

Q. Twenty-Seventh Floor:

The 27th floor consists of a single, ceremonial room ringed by an exterior colonnaded observation deck. The Tower Reception Room ceiling is approximately twenty-five feet in height with coffering and is decoratively painted. The space is approximately 45 feet square. The interior elevations are comprised of a series of pilasters framing tall windows of which there are five on each side. The windows are of metal with mullions in a criss-cross pattern. The lower portion of the windows have three vertically oriented single paned lights.

The interior walls are plaster with marble bases and gold painted inscriptions on each wall. The north wall inscription reads: "No government demands so much from the citizens as democracy and none gives as much back," James Bryce. The south wall reads: "With written laws, the humblest in the state is sure of equal justice with the great," Euripides. The east wall reads: "That government is the strongest of which every man feels himself a part," Thomas Jefferson. The west wall reads: "The city came into being to preserve life; it exists for the good life," Aristotle. The flooring in this space consists of red quarry tile pavers labeled "Promenade Tile" on the original drawings.

An exterior observation gallery encircles the Reception Room that is eight feet wide. At the west side there is an operable bell inscribed with "Let Freedom Ring." The exterior walls of the gallery are buff colored terra cotta. There are two small toilet rooms located in the northwest and southwest corners with the elevator and stair located at the northeast and southeast corners respectively.

The room offers panoramic view of a large portion of the surrounding Los Angeles metropolis. Originally the room offered an unobstructed view extending from the Sierra Madre Mountains to Santa Catalina Island to Mount San Jacinto. However, due to the number of skyscrapers in the vicinity the view today is not as complete.

2. Stairways:

On the first through fourth floors there are four sets of stairs. The fifth through eleventh floors are serviced by two sets stairs at the western end of the structure. The tower floors are serviced by a set of stairs in the northeast corner and a secondary set in the southeast corner.

3. Corridors:

Historically, the corridors within City Hall are wide with marble flooring and decorative baseboards and crown molding. Many of the corridors retain their historic fabric.

4. Elevator Lobbies:

Typically the elevator lobbies have marble flooring and detailing similar to the corridors.

5. Flooring:

Flooring varied throughout the structure with much of the public areas being marble while office areas are of wood or linoleum. Tile flooring is present in many of the toilet rooms.

6. Openings:

A. Windows

Discussed at exterior section.

B. Doors

Many types of interior doors are present throughout the building. The wood, like that of the trim in the building, is oak. A common door type leads into major spaces on the upper floors and consists of double, single opaque glass doors. These entryways have side lights and a transom as well.

Doors to stairwells are double, single opaque glass doors with a transom but no side lights. Doors into offices directly off of corridors generally are single light opaque glass doors with an operable transom.

7. Decorative Finishes and Trim:

Decorative features have been described for each floor. The original drawings indicate that all the trim in the building is oak.

8. Hardware:

Historic hardware has been described for each floor, where applicable.

9. Light Courts:

Interior light courts are provided in each of the four quadrants of the base section. These courts run from the basement to the fourth floor. They are faced with glazed terra cotta brick, similar to the larger terra cotta blocks on the street elevations.

D. Site:

1. General Setting and orientation:

Los Angeles City Hall is located at North Spring Street, Los Angeles. The building is north of First Street, south of Temple Street, east of Spring Street and west of Main Street within the Civic Center Area. The building and grounds cover a full city block (about 6 1/2 acres), The site is within a completely urban setting. Federal, County and city office buildings surround City Hall on the north, east and west sides. To the south, commercial and retail uses exist.

2. Historic Landscape design:

Landscaping consists of large specimen trees, lawns and planting beds that enhance the southern section of the parcel. The south lawn area is used for ceremonial occasions. Smaller areas of open space on the west and north sides are landscaped. A narrow planting bed along the east side of the building abuts the sidewalk.

Part III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

A. Original Architectural Drawings

Housed with the City of Los Angeles.

B. Early Views

Numerous historic photographs can be found in the collection of the Los Angeles Public Library History Division.

C. Interviews

No interviews were conducted for this report.

D. Bibliography

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Part IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the City of Los Angeles contracted with Architectural Resources Group and Parsons Brinckerhoff to perform HABS documentation of the Los Angeles City Hall. The building is scheduled to be seismically upgraded with some funding from FEMA. Under a Memorandum of Agreement with FEMA, the City of Los Angeles, and the State Office of Historic Preservation, HABS documentation was required.

Photographers for the project include: Bruce D. Judd, FAIA, Stephen J. Farneth, AIA and Monica Griesbach of Architectural Resources Group. John Ash of the John Ash Group, Architects, was also a photographer. Bridget Maley of Architectural Resources Group was the project Architectural Historian. Photographic assistants included Takashi Fukuda, Brad Roeder, and Kelly Balogh of ARG.